

Top Fourteen Suggestions from Experienced 21st Century Community Learning Centers Coordinators

Suggestions for beginning the first year's operation of the grant are...

- Have more time scheduled for planning, understanding that the attrition rate is high among staff, which sometimes takes the program off track.
- Make data collection an integral component in the planning.
- Survey, survey, survey (to improve).
- Ask your experienced peers, they have knowledge, and they have been where you are, not long ago.
- Attend conferences. You will gain valuable information, strategies and program ideas.
- Become friends with the community you serve.
- Don't be afraid to try new ideas, instructional strategies, project-based, hands-on activities that relate to the students' needs and families' needs. The more comfortable they can make their adult participants the more successful their program will be. Parents are the most important partners any educational program can acquire.
- Staffing is a challenge for the long haul. You need to acquire highly qualified, dedicated individuals who support your programs goals and objectives.
- Enjoy the time you spend with your participants and families. Watching them grow is amazing.
- Expect higher costs/expenses for materials and supplies for the first year of the grant. As the program grows, more is needed in the personnel expenses area.
- If operating from a school level, it helps to have activities already planned or outlined for teachers.
- Ask for teachers' input in the types of workshops/activities to offer to students and you will gain their support and they may even sign up to sponsor activities.
- Visiting an after school program was enlightening. Seeing how programs were organized and hearing challenges (and solutions) were both helpful.
- Get started...then change the things that are not giving the best results. Always keep the goals in mind and help the staff stay on target. Lots of professional development is the key.